

Biography - 1937

OUT IN FRONT

By George B. Brady

Lucy Craft Laney

A feature of the ancient Greek games was the relay race, in which the runner at the end of his lap handed on the lighted torch to his successor. This parable of education is symbolized in the life of Lucy Laney, who for almost half a century has carried the torch handed her by President War. The founder of Atlanta university, Haines Normal and Industrial Institute, Augusta, Georgia, a secondary school for Negro girls and boys, was founded by this woman fifty-two years ago. It has long been recognized as the best institution of this kind in Georgia.

Lucy C. Laney, born a slave in 1854 in Macon, Ga., spent most of her childhood in Savannah. Her father, the Rev. David Laney, was a preacher or exhorter, as such preachers were called in slavery days. He later became an ordained Presbyterian minister and pastor of the Presbyterian church, now the Washington Avenue Presbyterian church, in Savannah.

Her mother, whose name was not given, belonged to the Campbell family. Her parents were allowed upon their marriage to live together in a home of their own, to which they returned after their day's work. Here Lucy grew up amid many children, for besides their own large family, the Laney's took in cousins and orphaned children of friends. She profited by the physical development resulting from romping and fighting with these boys and girls, but her intellectual growth was not retarded during these years.

Taught by Owner

She was taught to read and write by Miss Campbell, her master's sister. Her mother's owner was a teacher, and the care of his library was one of her tasks. Sometimes Mrs. Laney would take her daughter to the Campbells, and while the mother was dusting the library, Lucy would snuggle in a deep chair to wander through fairyland with "The Three Bears" and "Little Red Riding Hood." Thus early in her career, Lucy Laney knew not only the rough and tumble side of life but also the literary—the quiet library and the companionship of books.

Intensely interested in Lucy's education, Miss Campbell chose her books, and made it possible for her to enter Atlanta uni-

versity at the age of 15. Miss Laney was one of the four students who comprised the class of 1873, the first class to be graduated from Atlanta university. Her teaching career began in the public schools of Savannah where she was soon promoted to the principalship of the school. On account of failing health she went to Augusta in search of a more healthful climate. When her health improved she went back to her former work in Savannah, but later she returned a second time to Augusta.

During those years of experience in public school work Miss Laney found that, despite her youth, she could handle the worst pupils, keeping them busy and interested. But as public school teaching did not give full sway to her personality she gladly accepted an invitation from the Presbyterian Board of Missions for Freedmen to start a private school in Augusta. This agency was doing educational as well as religious work in the South. It did not see its way, however, to maintain the school, the opening of which it had sanctioned; consequently, Miss Laney had to raise the funds herself.

Aroused by News Item

Becoming incensed over an article in a white Georgia newspaper which had said that Negro women were not fit to nurse or care for white children, Miss Laney decided upon that day to devote her life to the training and uplift of her people.

To this end on January 6, 1866, without means for maintenance, Lucy Laney opened a little school in the basement of the Christ Presbyterian church, Cummings and Telfair streets, Augusta, Ga. On that first rainy morning there were present only six pupils—three little girls, one large girl, and two little boys. The very earnestness of this youthful educator made her many friends from the start.

At first it was the intention of the founder to take in only girls, but when some poor, ragged, interesting boy arrived on her doorstep, she took him in. The second year there were nearly two hundred and fifty children. In fact, there were always plenty of children, but no funds.

After facing many hardships, frequently denying herself many of the necessities of life, Miss Laney gradually built a school worthy of the title, with substantial buildings, comfortable accommodations and effi-

cient teachers.

Got Outside Help

With an increase in the popularity of the work being done by this woman, several philanthropic white men and women contributed to her cause thereby enabling her to proceed with the development of an institution sorely needed in the vicinity in which it had been established.

One can begin to realize the magnitude of the service that Haines Normal and Industrial Institute renders when he considers the large Negro population in Georgia. The state has more than a million Negroes with thirty-six and one half percent of illiteracy as compared with seven and eight-tenths percent of illiteracy among the whites, although the Negro group comprises forty-five and one-tenth percent of the total population. Few of the Georgia cities have provided adequately for Negro education and rural school facilities for Negroes are still meager. Of the fourth grade. Thus, Haines Institute, an oasis of knowledge in a desert of ignorance, provides for the thirsty.

Haines Normal and Industrial Institute has risen to its present proportions of three brick buildings and several frame structures, an enrollment of seven hundred and thirteen students and twenty-six teachers. It has graduates in most of the prominent Negro universities in the country.

Miss Laney had been a real mother to both the pupils and teachers of her institution, truly loving them always and, therefore, doing what is best for their ultimate good.

Many of her former students, now heads of prominent families and concerns, have only the highest of praise for the untiring, unselfish and sincere efforts of this woman.

President Pays Tribute

While Taft was President of the United States he was guest speaker at a large meeting in the interest of Hampton Institute at Carnegie Hall, New York city. He paid tribute to Lucy Laney, saying, that after spending several months in the South he had seen nothing in the way of efficiency and of self-sacrifice that could compare with the work of Miss Laney at Haines Institute.

In recognition of her services the degree of Master of Arts was conferred upon Miss Laney by Lincoln university in 1904; by her alma mater, Atlanta university, in 1923; by South Carolina State college in 1925; and by Howard university in 1930. For one who has sent numbers of students to the leading institutions of learning for Negroes in America such

an honor should make Lucy Laney know that her life has been a great one.

OUT IN FRONT

By George B. Brady

Maggie Lena Walker

IN Jackson ward, a distinctly Negro section of historic Richmond, Va., two buildings are pointed out to tourists, namely, the Sixth Mount Zion Baptist church, the institution of John Jasper of "sun-do-move" fame, and the office building of the Independent Order of St. Luke. Both of these buildings are connected with dynamic personalities—the first representing the work on an individualistic minister of the gospel; the second, the attainments of a woman with vision and love, Mrs. Maggie Lena Walker.

One cannot appreciate the achievements of such a remarkable woman, however, until he enters this one hundred thousand dollar office building and sees 50 men and women at work.

Maggie Lena Mitchell, the oldest child of William and Elizabeth Mitchell, was born in Richmond, Va. It is thought that the name, Maggie Lena, was the result of attempting to do honor to Mary Magdalene. "Little Maggie" was loved by her father and spoiled by all except her mother. The sudden disappearance of her father and the subsequent finding of his body in the river five days later caused her girlish heart to know grief very early. Her mother, then, had the difficult task of providing for two children by means of washing and ironing. Maggie attempted to care for her brother during the day, but he proved to be rather refractory.

Led School Strike

Maggie set out early to get an education immediately after the Civil war. Her first effort was at the old Lancaster school across from the jail in Richmond. Her teachers were southern white women whose families had been impoverished by the war of secession. They evinced great interest in the pupils, however, and Maggie did well, as is evidenced by the fact that she was promoted every year. At the age of 11, she made a profession of faith in Christ. She became more active in the Sunday school, serving as an assistant teacher and later as a full-fledged instructor. At home during these years she was indispensable, doing the marketing, bringing the clothes

for her mother's home-laundry, and helping with the washing and ironing.

Early in her career she manifested the spirit of protest as well as that of industry. In high school she was a member of the class of 1883 that went on a strike against the custom of segregating the Negro graduates by holding their exercises in a church while the white commencement was held in the theater. This event stands recorded as the first school strike of Negroes in America.

After graduating from the high school Maggie Mitchell taught in the old Lancaster school for three years. While teaching she became the agent for the Woman's Union, an insurance company that looked solely after the interest of women. In this avocation she saw possibilities for organization and development which the school room did not afford, and she never lost that vision.

Active at Early Age

In September, 1890, she married Armstead Walker, a prominent contractor. To this marriage two sons, Russell E. T. and Melvin DeWitt, were born. Twenty-five years later, in 1915, Mr. Walker died. Following the death of her husband, her mother and oldest son died in 1922 and 1923 respectively.

Mrs. Walker reached the turning point in her career, however, before she was graduated from high school. On her fourteenth birthday, she joined the Independent Order of St. Luke, a fraternal organization that was originated in 1867 by Miss Mary Prout, an ex-slave in Baltimore, Md. It was the founder's aim to systematize ministering to the sick and the burial of the dead among her people.

After taking an active part in the progress of this institution, Mrs. Walker was rewarded with election to the secretaryship of this organization.

At 16 she was elected as a delegate to the annual convention of this order. Receiving from time to time promotions for her endeavors, Mrs. Walker soon filled every grand office from Sentinel to Right Worthy Grand Chief, the position she was holding when her first son was born. Just prior to that time, Magdalene Council No. 125 was organized and named for her.

With the establishing of a juvenile department, she was so successful in this new department that at present there are

35 new circles and over 1,225 youths belonging to the organization.

Bank President

Starting with a deposit of about \$8,000 and \$25,000 in paid-up capital, the St. Luke Penny Savings bank, with Mrs. Maggie L. Walker as president, opened its doors. She had to learn banking just as she had a few years prior to that learned bookkeeping, accounting, and insurance. Serving as president and the inspiration of the bank for 27 years, Mrs. Walker enjoyed the distinction of having been the first woman bank president, in the United States and the only Negro woman president in the history of the race. The St. Luke Penny Savings bank, later the St. Luke Bank and Trust company, has paid its stockholders a five percent dividend steadily, regardless of panics and unfavorable business conditions.

This bank not only served as a watch dog for its depositors but always sought to assist them in establishing businesses and the buying of homes, furnishing money for these ventures. Chief above everything else it has always encouraged thriftiness among children.

Mrs. Walker was always a beneficial factor in community projects, giving freely of her means and lending herself to all efforts for the good of humanity. Standing out most prominently has been her work centered in the Council of Colored Women, which she served as president since its organization in 1912.

Interested in Young People

Mrs. Walker was especially interested in the welfare of the young people of the race. Besides the offices previously mentioned she had a membership on the board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; she was a director of the National Training School for Women and Girls of Lincoln Heights, D. C.; and she was a member of the Board of Trustees of Virginia Union university of Richmond, Va.

As an appreciation and a recognition of her contributions to the uplift of the community this university in 1925 conferred upon Mrs. Walker the honorary degree of Master of Science. She also received much praise from many of the city and state dignitaries, including former Governor E. Lee Trinkle who was known to remark, "If the state of Virginia had done no more in 50 years, with its funds spent on the education of the Negroes, than educate Mrs. Walker, the state would have been amply repaid for its outlay and efforts."

With Maggie Lena Walker's death, the Negro race lost one of the biggest contributors to its progress.

OUT IN FRONT

By George B. Brady

Jane Edna Hunter

AS one pictures Negro girls in the South, especially those in the rural districts, one imagines their loneliness and their yearnings for the gayety of city life. Contrasting the dearth of life in a rural Southern section with the dazzling lights and attractions of a large Northern center, it is easy to see that almost insurmountable difficulties confront non-professional girls when they arrive in metropolitan cities far removed from their homes.

Even though some cities have attempted to remedy this condition by establishing separate branches of the Young Women's Christian Association, there always remained many to suffer this agony of being all alone in a big city, and not knowing just what to do about it.

To this problem, Jane Edna Hunter offered a solution in 1913 at Cleveland with the establishing of what is now known as the Phillis Wheatley Association. So intense has been this woman's desire to make "big city life" a bit easier for migrating rural southern girls that the idea has so spread that now girls coming to these cities need no longer fear the pangs of loneliness while trying to gain a foothold in new and broader fields.

Humble Birth

Jane was born December 13, 1882, on a plantation six miles from Pendleton, South Carolina. Her parents, Edward and Harriet Harris were Christian people, her father being a trustee of the Methodist Episcopal church. He was an ambitious man, but lacked formal training. Jane relates that while she was between the ages of four and ten, the family as her father's tenants moved about four times constantly during these years to different farms. During that time, her father did the farm-work while the mother and children harvested the crops.

The first school that Jane attended was three miles from her home. It was simply a room about twelve by fourteen feet in the home of an old man named James Goldman. Twenty or more children were crowded into this one room. Later, after her father learned that a Baptist minister, the Rev. A. R. Robinson, had opened a school in the nearby church, Jane and her brother were sent to this school, walking daily about 12 miles. At the age of 10 her education was interrupted by the death of her father. The shock of which she says that she has never become reconciled.

Shortly after the death of her father, her mother, because of

economic conditions decided to give her children away and seek employment in order to support them. Jane went to Mr. and Mrs. Watkins, a white family in Anderson, South Carolina, for whom she worked for her board and lodging, which meant that at the age of 10 Jane was caring for three children, helping with the cooking, and doing most of the washing and ironing. Here she stayed often during her mother's absence, suffering by her mother's return home to nurse her mother.

Helped By Friends

In spite of the many setbacks suffered by this ambitious girl, she managed to regularly attend some school, assisted by philanthropic relatives or friends of the family. This same sort of assistance brought about her chance to go to Cleveland with a family to whom she had gone to stay and was persuaded to leave with them for Cleveland the next day after arriving at their home.

The first few years were spent working as a trained nurse, this training she had previously received while attending several nursing schools including the Dixie Hospital and Training School for Nurses at Hampton Institute, Virginia. Oftentimes she relates, it was necessary for her to live off the most frugal of diets between cases in order to make ends meet. Finally with the help of prominent Cleveland physicians she was able to obtain recognition for her services on the par with any of the first-class white nurses, with more substantial fees.

One would think that after all the years of privations behind her, Jane Hunter would be satisfied with her lot and settle down to nurse for the rest of her life. This was not so, for she was constantly during these years haunted by the thought that she wanted to do something for her race. It was while walking the floor of one of the offices in which she was employed that she saw the need of an institution to house and protect colored women who came to town as strangers.

A Hard Struggle

Not one to get an idea and then sit down and wait for developments, she at once set about to put this idea into some semblance of organization and within three days after receiving this inspiration, on November 11, 1911, she called the first meeting to organize a Working Girls Home Association and for one year and six months the struggle to bring this work into existence was tremendous as well as dramatic.

Holding her first meeting with the servant girls with whom she had met in private homes while nursing, the idea soon spread to others, even attracting the attention of some of the city's pioneer families who attended and voiced their opinions and suggestions for the promotion of this intended "lost" in the big cities for want of enlightenment as to the pitfalls awaiting those ignorant of their ex-istence. Not desiring to be known as "Working Girls," the name was changed to the Phillis Wheatley Association. With Jane Hunter at the helm no matter how hard the struggle, this new idea, after many a struggle and sacrifice managed to remain intact and keep the income within a close margin to its expansion.

The first house, located at 2265 East Fortieth street, was opened July 24, 1913. The first floor was used for offices and parlors, the second for dormitory space, and the third for storage. At the formal opening, there were 15 girls to live in the home, paying \$1.25 a week for room rent; but the house could have accommodated at least 22. As soon as girls made desirable friends, secured suitable employment, and became connected with the church, the association placed them in private homes and took in strangers.

Gradually with the interest of outsiders increasing, the association grew until in March, 1914, the board of trustees persuaded Miss Hunter to give up all outside work and take full charge of the institution as general secretary at a monthly salary of \$75. The work department inaugurated January 10, 1916, served the girls at nominal rates. The gross receipts for 1916 showed the department to be self-supporting with the income in excess of the expenditures.

This success was not without difficulties; for so great was the increase in Cleveland's Negro population during the first years of this organization that it was necessary to seek larger quarters, entailing the negotiations for an 80-room house to be used for this expansion. Facilitating the new negotiations, Jane Hunter steadfastly refused to leave town until most of the money had been raised in order to make the deal for the new property. Upon her return from a four-months recuperation, she raised the \$8,000 for remodelling the new quarters.

Aid to Many

In 1924, the Phillis Wheatley Association gave 27,427 nights' lodging to 1,201 girls in Cleveland; found employment for 7,239; enrolled 7,815 in cooking, sewing, gymnastic and study classes; and served 46,170 meals in the dining-room and cafeteria. At the Doan Branch

playground, the attendance was 12,072. In the neighborhood of the Phillis Wheatley Association building 4,124 visits were made by members of the staff.

At present the association now enjoys a pretentious nine-story structure located on spacious premises at 4450 Cedar avenue, which was opened to the public December 15, 1927. In this way Jane Hunter has with 137 rooms and many features consisting of 24-hour elevator service, hot and cold running water, attractive parlors, and recreation rooms. For the public there is a cafeteria offering home-cooked food at moderate prices.

Obtaining this imposing edifice was no easy task for in the midst of a drive to raise the \$600,000 to finance this project, a problem taxing the heartiest of supporters, was laid to their very doorstep, that of encouraging a Negro family to move out of a restricted area or else lose the white support to this movement. Miss Hunter did not yield to the wishes of racial prejudices and succeeded in spite of all opposition, closing the building campaign "over the top," including a gift of \$100,000 from John D. Rockefeller Jr., given in memory of his mother, Mrs. Laura Spelman Rockefeller.

Besides the comfortable facilities at the main building, several centers are maintained in other sections of the city. A summer camp for girls is likewise operated under the guidance of this organization. Music and dramatics in which Negroes are gifted receive attention from a group of efficient workers.

As an indication of the esteem with which it is held, the program of the Phillis Wheatley Association has been recognized by the Department of Applied Social Service of Western Reserve University, of Cleveland, to the extent that young women working for the degree of Master of Science in Social Service Administration can do their field work at the Phillis Wheatley.

Also a Lawyer

It would have been impossible for Jane Hunter to have developed a plant of such magnitude if she herself had not grown. During these more than a score of years she has taken six weeks' courses at the National Board of the Y. W. C. A., New York city; she has attended night school in Cleveland; and she has taken extension courses from Western Reserve university. She studied law for four years, graduating from the Baldwin Wallace college, and was admitted to the bar in 1925. Her legal training is of invaluable service to the Phillis Wheatley Association and its constituents.

Miss Hunter's present objective is to develop a National Phillis Wheatley Association Department of the National Association of Colored Women.

As a step in this direction, a Phillis Wheatley association has been established in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, which is primarily a home for working girls. As general secretary of this new home, she sent a Miss Cleo Link, who had been doing special work among girls and women at the Cleveland unit. In this way Jane Hunter has dedicated her life to unselfish service of Negro girls and women as a tribute to her mother and grandmother and feels that in this work of hers she will be able through the elevating influence of girls that are exposed to this point the way to those preceding them to reach their goals in the professional world.

Biography - 1937

LIFE OF BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

HAMPTON INSTITUTE, Va.—(SNS)—In its leading editorial for February the Southern Work-

man will say: "At a time when the question of employment has become the most serious one which he has faced since emancipation; when he must search himself and his thinking as he has never had to before; and when there seems to be a broader disposition throughout the country to give him a hearing, the Negro can do worse than to turn back a little while and commune with the spirit and philosophy of Booker T. Washington."

The passage of time has healed the bitterness of the years, during which many of his doctrines were the subject of sharp controversy and angry dissent. In consequence, there is a greater readiness now to re-examine this great leader—for he was great; and to see if there is any healing in the remedies he prescribed for the ills of his own people and for the national disease of hostilities.

These reflections must have been in the mind of Dr. Anson Phelps Stokes when he prepared his recent "A Brief Biography of Booker Washington," a little work which has just been published by the Hampton Institute Press.

Premising that "no definitive biography of Booker Washington has ever been published"; that "his conception and demonstration of the worth-while life based on the realities of human experience are to a large extent applicable to all races and groups"; and that "The white man can profit by them as much as the colored man," Dr. Stokes has written a very readable monograph of forty-two pages, including a comprehensive index.

The book contains seven chapters. Dr. Washington's early years and his experiences and impressions at Hampton Institute are covered in the first two chapters. The influence exerted upon him by General Samuel C. Armstrong is noted and remarked.

Tuskegee Institute and its achievements are considered in brief and then three chapters discuss the speeches, views and attitudes which epitomized his principles of education and life. The last chap-

ter deals with the death of Dr. Washington and closes with additional comments which give further understanding of the principles to which this educator committed his life.

OUT IN FRONT

By George B. Brady

Scipio A. Jones

A GIRL of ten was waving her arms in front of her astonished brother, "Justice!" she cried, her voice raising in excitement. "All I ask of you, gentleman of the jury, is justice."

"Shut up," the small boy said unsympathetically, but she continued to call for justice and to raise one hand and then another to heaven. Suddenly she relaxed and dropped into a chair. "Can't you guess who I was?" she said reproachfully. "I was Scipio Jones."

That was thirty odd years ago. The little girl had been taken by her mother to court to hear the young colored lawyer, already becoming famous, defend a Negro client. His eloquence had roused her imagination. She had recognized his power.

A Native of Arkansas

Scipio Jones is an Arkansan who has lived most of his life in Little Rock. He was educated in the public schools and at two of the city's private institutions, Philander Smith and Shorthall colleges. He early went to study law, and tried his best to get into the state law school. His color barred his admittance. He thought that he might pick up crumbs of learning if he were janitor, and offered his services for nothing; but his plan may have been suspected, for he was refused the job. He ended by reading law in the office of various white lawyers in the city, and was admitted to the bar in 1899. He opened his office and began his legal practice.

The career of a colored lawyer in Arkansas was not unlike that of a white lawyer, save that he practices only among Negroes. But Scipio Jones was recognized as having unusual ability. With a clear mind and a tenacious memory he combined an orator's persuasiveness. The court began to appoint him as counsel when the accused had no lawyer. Much of his work was

without compensation, but it was valuable experience. Many a man's life depended upon his acumen and eloquence. His reputation for success grew, and with it his practice. In 1915 he was admitted to practice in the Federal Courts, and in April of the same year he was elected a special judge in the municipal court of Little Rock. A number of secret societies, prominent among them the Masonic Order, retained him as their counsel.

Attacked Penal System

He was trusted by the Negroes and esteemed and respected by the whites.

Arkansas has some ugly scandals regarding the treatment of its convicts. The county handed over prisoners to contractors, who paid their fines, holding them until the fines were worked off. This might be for an indefinite period. Jones defended many convicts, charging the contractors with false imprisonment and cruelty. In one case he sued a planter for \$75,000 in the Federal Court, finding how expensive the suit was becoming. The planter set all his convict labor loose and went back to Mississippi, his former operating place. The Negro lawyer learned to understand the helplessness of the prisoner, who at times had committed no greater offense than "loitering," and the power of the planter equaling that of the master under slavery.

It is given to some people to do their best work early in life. They ripen quickly and their energy is soon exhausted. It was not so with Scipio Jones. He steadily increased his practice. He grew to be regarded by the white lawyer as an opponent to be reckoned with. Tactful, with a psychologist's understanding of people, he overcame any latent prejudice against him. He did not fail in his respect to the white man, whether witness or legal opponent, but he also did not fail to make his point.

Defended the Unjustly Accused

On several occasions, this eminent lawyer displayed his ability and legal knowledge to the

point of successfully defending many Negroes who, without his guiding hand would have of a certainty paid the penalty for being black, the hangman's noose, almost always convicted on the most fragile of evidence.

Prominent among these cases were the Elaine riots which evolved out of the attempts of a group of Negro sharecroppers to learn why their "shares" were always less than their expenses, and during a meeting of this kind, a group of white men fired into the meeting starting a riot in which several whites and many Negroes were killed. For this twelve men were sentenced to die and sixty-seven to imprisonment for one to twenty-one years. This was in 1919 in Eastern Arkansas, four years later through the efforts of Scipio Jones, all were freed on conditional pardons.

This case would never have been won if Jones had not had the courage to face those whites who had come to respect him and tell them that they were wrong and point out those blunders so plainly that there was nothing left for the higher courts to do but place right over might and grant a re-trial which subsequently ended with the freeing of those men who until the intervention of this man, were doomed to death or unnecessary years of penal servitude.

Regarded Highly

It was a general opinion that the seventy-nine men convicted were those who would not sign up with the planters and sell themselves into slavery. They were not criminals. After the case had been satisfactorily settled it was asked how Scipio Jones stood in the community. To this reply a prominent white man was heard to respond that "Scipio Jones is respected by everyone in this community whose respect is worth anything, white or black. He stands ace high."

Note.—Taken from *Portraits in Color* by Mary White Ovington.

November 14, 1937

Life of William Dawson Reads Like Success Story

Rise of Negro Composer Compared to That of Booker Washington

The biography of William L. Dawson, famous Negro composer and director of the Tuskegee choir which appears here Nov. 19, reads like an unbelievable "success story."

Like his famous teacher, Booker T. Washington, he rose from the most humble of beginnings to national fame. Like Washington, too, he made his own way through school and remained to work and help in the field of his own race.

Dawson ran away from home when he was 13 years old. Without funds nor friends who were able to help him he determined to have an education and made his way to Tuskegee Institute.

Although he lacked funds ever for an entrance fee, his earnestness and ability sold the school authorities on the belief that he was worthy of help. The principal Booker T. Washington, who had worked his way through Hampton Institute, put him to work on the school farm.

Began Study of Music

During the next seven years Dawson worked in every division of the agricultural department, and in addition to the hours he spent there and on his studies, began to take music and study harmony under Alice Carter Simmons, a niece of the founder. Later he joined the institute choir and begun to travel extensively with the Tuskegee singers.

After his graduation in 1921 Dawson began the study of compositions and orchestration with Henry V. Stearns at Washburn College, Topeka, Kan., then he went to the Horner Institute of Fine Arts in Kansas City, where he studied theory and counterpoint.

In 1921, he also became director of music at Kansas City Vocational College in Topeka and the following year he became director of music at Lincoln High school in Kansas City, where he supervised the music of Negro schools of that city for four years.

In 1926 Dawson went to Chicago where he continued the study of composition. There he became the first trombonist of the Chicago Civic orchestra under Frederick Stock and Eric DeLamarter. At the same time he directed one of the principal church choirs in the city.

An Ambition Fulfilled

In Chicago he began the realization of his life's ambition—to compose a symphony in the strictly Negro idiom, using themes derived from Negro folk music.

In 1930 he returned to his alma mater where he organized and conducted its school of music. While he was in New York where the Tuskegee choir, of 100 Negro voices, appeared for six weeks at Radio City, his manuscript was placed in the hands of Leopold Stokowski.

The symphony is based entirely upon Negro folk music. The themes are taken from what are popularly known as Negro spirituals and can be recognized by the practiced ear throughout the composition.

The choir's program here is being sponsored by St. Luke's hospital which is under the direction of Dr. C. W. Dyer. The hospital is the only one in the city exclusively for Negroes and a percentage of the proceeds from the choir's program will go toward its upbuilding.

Dr. Dyer said half of the municipal auditorium will be reserved for white patrons.